



5-8 DISCOVER Climbing

Technical Rock Climbers Today

Fritz Wiessner led a party of professional mountain climbers to the top of Devils Tower in 1937. The party completed the **ascent** (climb up) in about five hours. When they reached the top, Wiessner and his party collected samples of rock and vegetation for scientific study.

The next year, Jack Durrance and his party ascended to the summit. Today, the easiest and most popular climb for technical rock climbers at Devils Tower is called the **Durrance Route**.

Most climbing at Devils Tower is **free climbing**. This means that natural holds such as ledges, edges, and cracks are used. The equipment used is a safety system and many items are included for this purpose. Two people are necessary for a climb and this is sometimes referred to as the "buddy system." One partner is the **leader** while the other **belays** (controls the rope by taking in or letting out).

Rappeling is the technique of descending. Climbers "slide" down their ropes which are anchored into the rock. One can slow their descent by "walking" down the rock using a rope through a brake device. Fixed **anchors** (bolts) have been installed in the rock on several rappel routes at the Tower. The climber, therefore, does not have to leave his own gear behind.

Park Rangers share valuable safety precautions and climbing conditions on the Tower with climbers. All climbers need to register with the National Park Service before beginning their climb and they must check in upon their return.

Today, there are more than 225 different routes to explore on Devils Tower. Climbing is safe if care is taken but one must know the techniques of rock climbing and think about safety at all times.

Listed below are several items used by technical rock climbers. Each item is hidden throughout the book. Find each one and write the page number beside the item.

